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AUTHORITY: 16 U.S.C. 551, 472.

SOURCE: 54 FR 3357, Jan. 23, 1989, unless otherwise noted.

§217.1 Purpose and scope.

(a) This part provides a process by which a person or organization interested in the management of the National Forest System may administratively appeal decisions to approve, amend, or revise a National Forest land and resource management plan or approve or amend a regional guide prepared pursuant to 36 CFR part 219. This part establishes who may appeal such decisions, the kind of decisions that may be appealed, the responsibilities of the participants in an appeal, and the procedures that apply. This part provides a review of such decisions by an official at the next administrative level.

(b) This part complements, but does not replace, numerous opportunities to participate in and influence agency decisionmaking provided pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and the associated implementing regulations and procedures in 40 CFR parts 1500–1508, 36 CFR parts 215, 216, and 219, Forest Service Manual Chapters 1920 and 1950, and Forest Service Handbooks 1909.12 and 1909.15.

[58 FR 58915, Nov. 4, 1993]

§217.2 Definitions.

For the purposes of this part—

Appellant is the term used to refer to a person or organization (or an authorized agent or representative acting on their behalf) filing a notice of appeal under this part.

Deciding Officer means the Forest Service line officer who has the delegated authority and responsibility to make the decision being questioned under these rules.

Decision document means a written document that a Deciding Officer signs to execute a decision subject to review under this part. Specifically a Record of Decision or a Decision Notice.

Decision documentation refers to the decision document and all relevant environmental and other analysis documentation on which the Deciding Officer based a decision that is at issue under the rules of this part. Decision documentation includes, but is not limited to, environmental assessments, findings of no significant impact, environmental impact statements, land and resource management plans, regional guides, documents incorporated by reference in any of the preceding documents, and drafts of these documents released for public review and comment.

Decision Notice means the written document signed by a Deciding Officer when the decision was preceded by preparation of an environmental assessment (40 CFR 1508.9).

Decision review or *review* is the term used to refer to the process provided in this part by which a higher level officer reviews a decision of a subordinate officer in response to a notice of appeal.

Forest Service line officer. The Chief of the Forest Service or a Forest Service official who serves in a direct line of command from the Chief and who has the delegated authority to make and execute decisions under this subpart. Specifically, for the purposes of this subpart, a Forest Service employee who hold one of the following offices and titles: Forest Supervisor, Deputy Forest Supervisor, Regional Forester, Deputy Regional Forester, Deputy Chief, Associate Deputy Chief, Associate Chief, or the Chief of the Forest Service.

Intervenor is an individual who, or organization that, is interested in or potentially affected by a decision under appeal pursuant to this part, who has made a timely request to intervene in that appeal.

Legal notice. A notice of a decision appealable under this part published in the FEDERAL REGISTER or in the legal notices section of a newspaper of general circulation as required by §217.5 of this part.

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Notice of appeal is the written document filed with a Reviewing Officer by one who objects to a decision covered by this part and who requests review by the next higher line officer.

Participants include appellants, intervenors, the Deciding Officer, and the Reviewing Officer.

Record of Decision is the document signed by a Deciding Officer recording a decision that was preceded by preparation of an environmental impact statement (40 CFR 1505.2).

Reviewing Officer is the line officer one administrative level higher than the Deciding Officer or, in the case of a discretionary review, one level higher than the line officer who issued a first-level appeal decision.

[54 FR 3357, Jan. 23, 1989; 54 FR 13807, Apr. 5, 1989, as amended at 55 FR 7895, Mar. 6, 1990; 58 FR 58915, Nov. 4, 1993]

§217.3 Decisions subject to appeal.

(a) The following decisions are subject to appeal under this part:

(1) Decisions to approve, amend, or revise a National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan including project or activity decisions for which environmental effects have been analyzed and disclosed within a final EIS and documented in a Record of Decision including approval, significant amendments, or revisions of a land and resource management plan.

(2) Decisions to approve or amend a regional guide prepared pursuant to 36 CFR part 219 and documented in a Decision Notice or Record of Decision are subject to appeal under this part, except as provided in §217.4.

(b) Decisions as defined in paragraph (a) of this section and documented in a Decision Notice or a Record of Decision that are made by a subordinate Forest Service staff officer acting within delegated authority are considered to be decisions of the Forest Service line officer.

[58 FR 58915, Nov. 4, 1993]

§217.4 Decisions not subject to appeal.

The following decisions are not subject to appeal under this part.

(a) Decisions on projects or activities implementing National Forest Land and Resource Management Plans in-

cluding project decisions that include a non-significant amendment to a National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan.

(b) Preliminary planning decisions or preliminary decisions as to National Environmental Policy Act or National Forest Management Act processes made prior to release of final plans, guides, and environmental documents.

(c) Recommendations of Forest Service line officers to higher ranking Forest Service or Departmental officers or to other entities having final authority to implement the recommendations in question, such as wilderness and wild and scenic river recommendations.

[58 FR 58915, Nov. 4, 1993]

§217.5 Giving notice of decisions subject to appeal.

(a) For decisions subject to appeal under this part, Deciding Officers shall promptly mail the appropriate decision document (§217.3(a)(1)) to those who, in writing, have requested it, and to those who are known to have participated in the decisionmaking process.

(b) The Deciding Officer shall also give notice of decisions appealable under this part as follows:

(1) For all initial decisions of the Chief, notice shall be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(2) For all other decisions, legal notice of the decision shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation identified pursuant to the requirements of paragraph (d) of this section. Deciding Officers may, at their discretion, also publish notice of their decisions in additional newspapers. Where a Deciding Officer elects to publish such additional notices, they shall be published after an initial legal notice has been published in the principal newspaper identified in the biannual FEDERAL REGISTER notice provided for in paragraph (d) of this section. Any such additional newspaper notices shall indicate the date that the appeal period ends, which shall be calculated based on the date of publication of the initial notice in the principal newspaper identified in the biannual FEDERAL REGISTER notice.

(c) All notices published pursuant to this section shall include a concise description of the decision made by title